



*Qualifications, Skills and More! Characteristics Employers Look for when Hiring Newly Graduated Applicants for a Higher Occupational Level*

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This thesis is on characteristics employers considered when selecting employees'. By studying the characteristics used in the staffing process, this thesis contributes to the sociological and economic debate on inequality and stratification as results of job allocation and employer selection. Research shows that employers consider multiple characteristics during the staffing process. Examining individual characteristics (e.g., qualifications, which are the primary focus of the inequality and stratification literature) is insufficient for explaining the differences related to who obtains prestigious jobs (e.g., managerial jobs) and thus is insufficient to explain differences in job allocation, inequality and stratification. The characteristics frequently debated in the economic and sociological literature, such as educational qualifications, field of study, social, cognitive and technical skills, personality, and effort, constitute the main characteristics studied in this thesis.

The thesis contributes seven points of progress to the debate on job allocation and stratification in the context of the theoretical mechanism outlined in this monograph. The argument that the mechanisms explain a macro-level phenomenon brings into question the existence of the phenomena that purportedly underlie the macro explanations. The results in this thesis indicate a model with mixed mechanisms. The points of progress are organised around the use of characteristics and tools (the use of qualifications, cognitive and non-cognitive characteristics, and multiple characteristics and selection tools during the selection) and five mechanisms (a self-selecting, self-promoting, subjective, and organisational fit in addition to the trainability mechanism) that complement and contradict the existing mechanisms.